

Opinion

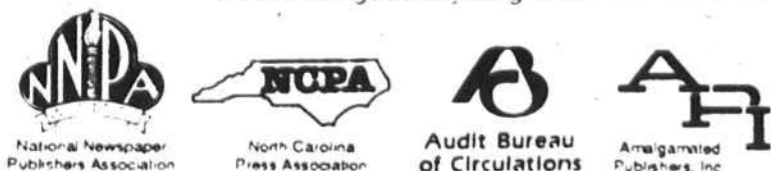
Unity Is a Necessity for African Americans

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Ernest H. Pitt • Ndubisi Egemonye

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Informing the Misinformed

It's no surprise that racial tensions have flared among high school students in Winston-Salem. What is surprising, however, is that only one student was seriously injured in the fight last week at Carver High School. School officials say tensions between whites and blacks at several schools, but Carver in particular, are at an all-time high. Again, this is not surprising. One Carver student said that last week's incident in which three black students allegedly attacked a white student occurred after a white student said that if black people wear Malcolm X t-shirts then they can wave the Confederate flag.

Sadly, those students who see a parallel there are not very erudite in the area of history. They have been misinformed by a lacking school system that has individuals in place who do not know — or are unwilling to share — that Malcolm X did not espouse what the Confederate flag stands for: racism. On the contrary, Malcolm X stood for self-determination, racial pride and self-defense in the face of white violence.

Students will continue to be misinformed as long as publications, such as one recently circulated in the school system, portray the black leader as someone who promoted violence against whites. Malcolm X loved black people, but for educators to translate that into a hatred of white people is robbing a generation of an important part of history. And they will continue to perpetuate ignorance and racial hatred.

William Clarence 'Billy' Eckstine

When Billy Eckstine died last week in Pittsburgh at the age of 78, America and the world lost a giant. He was to jazz what Hank Aaron was to baseball. What Joe Louis was to boxing. What Sammy Davis was to dancing. Billy Eckstine started his own band in 1944, which at some point included all-time greats Sarah Vaughn, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Dizzie Gillespie, Art Blakey, and others. But Eckstine did not get the fame, recognition or glory he so much deserved. Even though jazz broke many a color barrier in those days, because Billy Eckstine was an African American limits were placed on his career. Quincy Jones was quoted as saying some years ago in "The Pleasures of Jazz" that if Eckstine "had been white, the sky would have been the limit." Truer words were never spoken. But thanks to Billy Eckstine's smooth style, sophisticated taste and keen sense of tone, his music will remain legendary and will always be remembered.



Billy Eckstine

Credo of the Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from antagonisms when it accords to every person — regardless of race or creed — full human and legal rights. Hating no person, the Black Press strives to help every person, in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

About letters . . .

The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. The letter must also include the name, address and telephone number of the writer to ensure the authenticity of the letter. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to

Chronicle Mailbag
P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.

To the Editor:

This letter is in regards to an article that seemingly omitted the African-American community in its content. Individuals who "jumped on" the writer for this oversight should just ride around Winston-Salem and see if we don't still have two Winston-Salems — a black one and a white one. True, our African-American children are attending schools with other children, but don't forget that our very young are bused out of our neighborhoods the first five years of their lives and these are the years that they need most of their support from their families.

Secondly, there appear to be no African-American businesses in white neighborhoods, and a large majority of businesses in our communities are owned by whites. I don't blame the white businessman. I blame us because we spend more money at their businesses than at our own. Our community leaders and ministers need to come together on one accord and put economic development back in our neighborhoods, ministers have a captive audience on Sunday mornings and they talk about going to Heaven. This is great. I someday want to go to Heaven, but I also want to enjoy and live on earth.

Several people have voiced their outrage over the baseball owner's use of the "N" word when we use it all the time, and in reality and actuality, we should not use it either.

Our ministers and community leaders need to tell our people the real truth, and that truth is our fight against racism, and to restore economic power in our neighborhoods. We need to take control of our own destiny so that we may become owners of major restaurants, savings and loans, banks, dry cleaners, hotels and drug stores. All we have to do is simply pool our resources and support our own businesses.

My heart aches for my people because we have seemingly run backward faster than we marched forward. It's sad how we sat back and allowed former President George Bush sell us on the war and drugs that put several of our young African-American men in prison and a felony charge on their records for life. Once they are eventually released from prison, they try to obtain decent employment, but because of a felony charge, their chance of getting a job is nearly zero. And in many cases, these young men return to selling drugs and are arrested again. It is questionable to me why Bush pardoned one of the major drug dealers in our country. He also pardoned several savings and loan workers and those were involved in the Iran-Contra controversy. So you can clearly see that we must have a new direction.

I often think of the things I tried to do to make things better for the people of Winston-Salem, especially our people. I have marched for civil rights, boycotted businesses, met with company heads to get people jobs or to keep them from being fired. I have also helped people get adequate housing, bought fuel, paid rent, bought groceries, and even helped pay tuition for some college students. You name it and Pat Hairston was there to help out.

As I look over the course of my life, there have been so many wonderful people who have marched with me, prayed with me, laughed with me, and encouraged me when I needed an uplifting. I am forever grateful for these friends and supporters, many of whom still support me as I am incarcerated in prison. I don't belong in prison. I am not bitter because of my present dilemma. I just ask that my people wake up. I'm in prison, yes, but it could easily be one of your loved ones next. Beware of the FBI. This organization has had complaints against it by its own minority members for racial discrimination. An FBI director was convicted of drunk driving. In the trial that I along with my co-defendants were in, the FBI's chief witness, the president of a paving com-

pany, had been convicted of bid-rigging. Another witness was a developer that was convicted of bank fraud. I wonder if I, a black man, could have gone to the FBI and said that I had been offered a bribe from some white people, would the FBI have taken over five years to investigate them. I also wonder would an African-American judge have told the jurors to keep working six additional months and bring back some kind of indictment to convict these white people. Think about it.

The African-American federal judge who first viewed our case stated that the government was going to have a difficult time with the case. He seemingly could not see that this was the FBI's attack on black elected officials. Not only did this happen in Winston-Salem, it's happening all over this country. Look at this judge's record and see how much black people have progressed under him.

My people, if we are looking for a savior to ride up on a big white horse to save us, forget it. We must fight the same fight that we fought

together to resolve the issue. His response to me was that my request was "odd" and not the norm, and that many parents choose to deal with situations of this type on the telephone. If the parents are not available, they will receive a letter in the mail a few days later. He also informed me that even if I had been notified immediately, the solution will still be unilateral, as if to say that the suspension itself is the resolution to the problem and that the two children will automatically get along at their return.

Later that same afternoon after talking to my son, he did inform me that he indeed did throw the first blow. His reason for throwing the first blow was that he was being bullied and had been bullied since December. (The assistant principal also informed me of a note written on the counselor's card where another situation with the same individual had taken place, where once again, I had not been informed.)

Like the well-known *Highlights Magazine* monthly pictures, in my mind I find several things wrong

so productive if they try harder and talk about problems.

Parents, grandparents and all family head figures must come together and talk to and teach our children. They need to know that their future does not hinge on a flag of any type. The future of people lives in correct teaching and living, then applying it to lives.

There will always be flags flying, slurs uttered and signals passed, that can be insulting. There are too many flags and too many flag flyers for people to get bogged down in preventing it.

Let's all put our attention where it belongs. With our city, our schools, our state in the condition they are in, we need to focus on our blessings, our families, our heritage and how we can be role models.

Students in school, you are in a position to be good models for younger students in grade and elementary schools. Don't miss the chance to help someone else focus on the future, which is more important than any flag or any other kind of racial act.

Jessie Meadows Crockett
Winston-Salem

CHRONICLE MAILBAG Our Readers Speak Out

in the sixties. We need to get it together and keep it together. We need one hundred percent unity. Yesterday has passed; tomorrow is not promised; today is the time we must act. I am sure several who read this article will oppose its contents, but that's okay with me. Just ask yourself who is in control of your life and listen to yourself.

Patrick T. Hairston
Federal Prison Camp
Butner, N.C.

School Slogan Questioned

To the Editor:

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System has a new slogan which reads "School Work is Our Work!" Who is "our?" Had I been asked this question a month ago, I would have naively responded administrators, teachers, parents, community, and of course, students. Today, unfortunately, I question the slogan, specifically the use of the word "our."

At approximately 2:30 p.m., I received a call from one of the assistant principals at Paisley Middle School informing me that my son had been in a fight that took place on campus as approximately 12:50 p.m. The assistant principal went on to tell me that as a result of the fight, that he had been suspended for two days and asked if I would like to pick up his assignments. (My son had been put on the bus.) I was shocked and surprised that I had not been called immediately while my son was in the principal's office to have an opportunity to hear the details of the incident, and I informed the assistant principal that I was not pleased that I had not been included in the process, especially since as the administrators admitted, this was the first time my son had been sent to the office.

I called back to the school and asked to speak with the principal and was told he was in a meeting. I then decided that perhaps it would be good for me to go to the school in an effort to receive the details I felt I deserved as a parent during the process. I went to the school and patiently waited for the principal who was standing down the hall upon my arrival.

While talking with the principal I straightforwardly said to him that "I have no problem with my child being suspended if he broke school policy; however, I did have a problem with not being allowed to take part in a solution to the problem which was entirely unilateral." I also requested that it be noted on my child's record that anytime there is a disciplinary problem with him, that I would like to be notified immediately so that we all could work

with this picture. I have no argument with the school's policy that my son be suspended because he did indeed throw the first blow. However, I do take exception to the procedure in which the policy is administered. Children are put out of school as if they are a "piece of chewed bubble gum" without the support of a parent to be there with them to say "son, yes, you messed up, but let us determine what steps you can take to not make the same mistake again. But even worse than that, when a parent requests to be present when such matters are handled, they are grimaced upon with raised eyebrows and told "your request, quite franklin is odd" ... I can only imagine how my son must have felt.

How can we as a community expect to have a true "partnership" if administrators continue to leave parents completely out of the loop until everything is over and done with? Frankly, as a parent who wants to be involved in my child's school life academically as well as during discipline, I am offended and insulted that I am considered "odd" at a time when teachers and principals say they desire and need parental involvement. Inclusion should be encouraged by top administrators. In this situation, exclusion was encouraged. Therefore, I have no other choice but to conclude that the new school slogan, "School Work is Our Work," which decorates the school's hallways and teacher's clothing as well as coffee cups, is just that indeed ... a slogan, especially at Paisley Middle School!

Jacqueline Marshall
Winston-Salem

Focus on Future

To the Editor:

Racism is a belief that is in the heart and mind of a person. It is often demonstrated in subtle and sometimes visible ways.

According to Webster, a flag is a symbol and a symbol is a visible sign of something invisible.

The incident at Carver High School did not have to happen. I believe the flying of the Confederate flag is no longer an important enough issue for anyone to be hurt over. A flag and what it is said to represent does not deserve that kind of attention.

I do not want to sound as if I condone racism. I do not. However, retaliation to certain kinds of racism only tends to perpetuate it. Our schools were once places where all of us felt proud to send our young people, knowing they would be taught well and exposed to cultures. I do believe that our schools can be turned around with the help of our young people. Our students can be

TV Coverage Lacking

To The Editor:

Recent television coverage of the basketball tournaments of the two historically African-American conferences in a word -- sucks. ESPN televised the MEAC tournament at midnight. Thanks, that's just what the league needed -- west coast coverage for this Atlantic region conference.

The coverage of the SWAC tournament apparently will only be slightly better. According to my paper, the finals will be joined "in progress." You are too good to us.

However, TV's treatment is consistent with the policies followed by ESPN. "Black College Sports Today" is routinely moved from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and back again, with little or no notice provided to its viewing audience. In most papers across the nation, the show is not even listed in the sports on television section. So much for developing a large viewing audience.

I find it ironic that you have run features on racism in sports without considering how racially insensitive your policies are. Historically black school football games have appeared on ESPN in years. Next season the best quarterback-wide receiver combination in college football will be at Alcorn State (Steve "Air II" McNair and Chris Hinton). Both were All-South players in high school and both were academically eligible as freshmen. Their talents will go unnoticed by everyone but the NFL scouts because networks like ESPN refuse to televise games between black universities and because black Entertainment TV has become nothing more than MTV with soul. Too bad, because Hinton (6'6", 210) is going to be better than Rice, and McNair will be a first-round pick. I wonder why "homegirl" Robin Roberts never mentions Jackson State, Alcorn and Mississippi Valley, as she gushes over 'Ole Miss, Miss State and Southern Miss.

Too often during the season scorers from Black colleges are not reported on Sports Center. When they are reported, they are run in the very last group, long after Northern Iowa, Delaware, and others appear.

Finally, has ESPN ever televised a basketball game between two Black schools during the regular season? I don't think so. Perhaps it is time for you to examine your policies to determine what you do to promote racism in sports.

Michael E. Simmons
Arkansas A & M